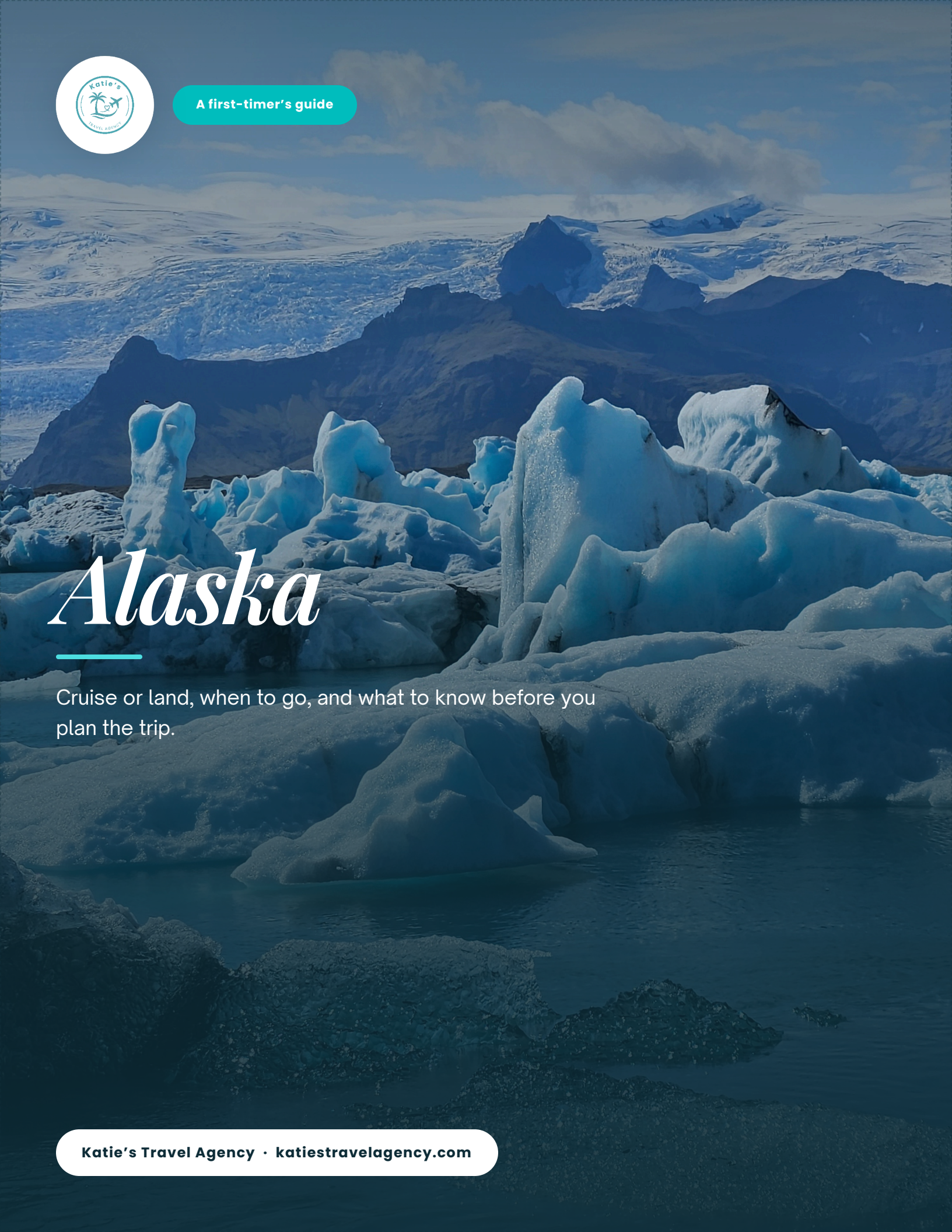


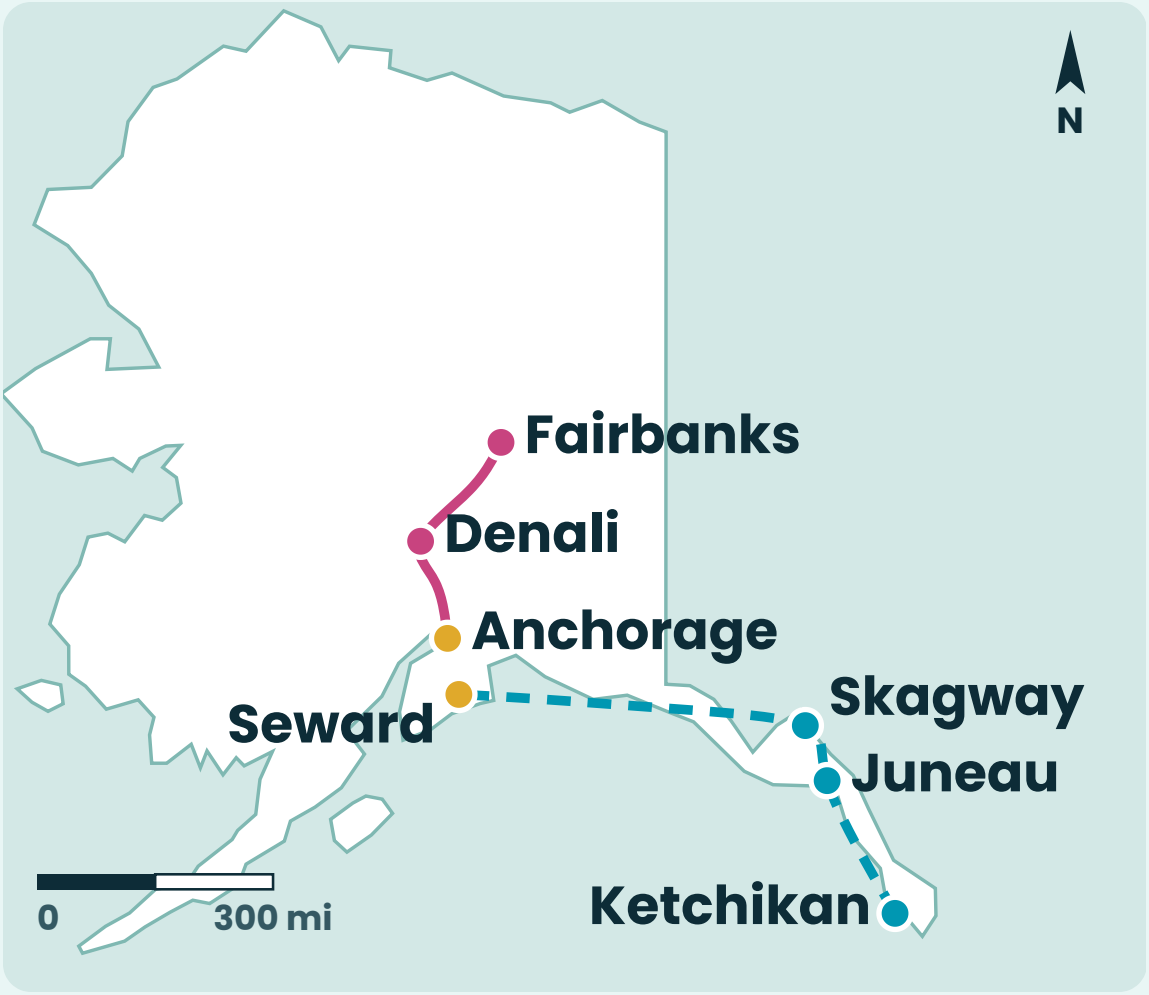
A first-timer's guide

Alaska

Cruise or land, when to go, and what to know before you plan the trip.

Katie's Travel Agency · katiestravelagency.com

Alaska is bigger than you think.





Inside Passage
Whales and eagles



Kenai
Bears and otters



Interior
Moose and caribou

Five fun facts about Alaska.

Bigger than huge
Bigger than Texas, California and Montana.

The capital city
The only US capital with no road in.

Shortest season
Just 90 days, mid-May to mid-August.

The Terminator
A wall of cold rain that ends the season.

Ancient ice
Ships serve ice thousands of years old.

Cruise or land? Here is the difference.

	By ship	By land
Focus	Glaciers, fjords, coastal wildlife and marine scenery.	Inland parks, mountains, local culture and highways.
Pace	Structured, with fixed arrival and departure times.	Completely flexible and self-paced.
Logistics	Effortless. Unpack once; transport and meals built in.	More work. Separate hotels, a rental car and meals.
Reach	Coastal ports: Juneau, Skagway, Ketchikan.	Interior and Kenai: Denali, Fairbanks, Seward.
Your days	A few hours per port before the ship departs.	Full days to hike, explore and stay late in town.

Choose the cruise if

You want a relaxing, low-stress trip built around dramatic ocean views, calving glaciers and easy moving between coastal towns.

Choose land if

You want an active, independent trip: hiking, scenic highways, North America's tallest peak, and evenings at local spots.


Humpbacks


Kenai ridges


Glacier landing

What I usually recommend

Do both. It is called a cruisetour.

Sailing + Alaska Railroad + Denali National Park. Coast and interior on one trip — for a first Alaska trip, the one I book most.

When to go

Five months, each a different trip. There is no bad one, only the one that matches what you came for.

May

Lowest prices

The driest, quietest month, with bears out of the den and rates at their lowest. Some high-country trails are still under snow.

~17 hrs light
Fewest people

June

Endless daylight

Solstice light that barely quits, wildflowers everywhere, everything open. My pick for couples who want long days outside.

~19 hrs light
Filling up

July

Warmest & busiest

Warmest weather, salmon running, and the best odds of seeing Denali out. Also the priciest and most crowded, and the best month for families.

~19 hrs light
Peak season

August

Wildlife at its best

Bears on the salmon streams, whales still feeding, berries everywhere. Wettest month, and dark enough by month's end for first aurora.

~16 hrs light
Wettest

September

Color & aurora

Tundra turns red and gold, crowds thin, and the northern lights come back. Go early — most lodges shut by mid-month.

~13 hrs light
Season closing

Book by

9–12 months out

The good cabins, lodges and rail seats go first.

Budget

Starting at $2,000

Per person for a seven-night summer sailing, depending on cabin and line.



Let's figure out which Alaska is yours.

Tell me who is coming and what you hope to see, and I will build a plan around it.

Start your inquiry